

The 2013 National Agricultural Policy (NAP)

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Key Messages

- Recognize the critical role of microenterprises in the agricultural value chain by including them explicitly in policy frameworks and support systems
- Strengthen the policy framework to ensure gender equity in all aspects of agricultural development, inclusive of a focus on women's land tenure and access to other resources, credit, and legal support
- Establish a robust monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning plan to ensure the safety of locally produced food, maintaining rigorous food safety standards from production to consumption
- Integrate explicit measures for environmental conservation, particularly concerning the activities of micro, small, and medium enterprises in the agricultural sector

Background and Evolution

The agricultural sector in Tanzania is a vital component of the country's economy, contributing 26% to the GDP as of 2022. The sector includes crops, livestock, forestry, hunting, and fisheries, with crop production alone accounting for 15% of the GDP. The 2013 National Agricultural Policy (NAP) serves as the primary guiding document for the country's agricultural sector and has played a significant role in its development. However, the NAP has several shortcomings that need to be addressed to better align with current economic conditions and environmental requirements.

Since Tanzania's independence, agricultural policies have evolved dramatically. Initial policies focused on government-managed systems, but post-1990s reforms shifted towards liberalization, reducing government intervention and encouraging private sector involvement. The 1997 Agricultural and Livestock Policy marked a major shift, emphasizing food security, private sector growth, and decentralization of agricultural services.

The 2013 NAP, which followed, aimed to

build on these reforms. (The NAP does not include livestock, which was addressed separately.) The NAP has 32 policy objectives, grouped into seven categories: Research, Inputs, Infrastructure, Marketing, Financing, Other Policy Issues, and Cross-Cutting Issues.



Key Policy Areas and Objectives

- Research and Development: Emphasizes the need for innovation in biotechnology, pest management, and fertilizer development.
- Inputs: Focuses on improving the seed industry, breeders' rights, and human resource development.

- Infrastructure: Prioritizes irrigation, mechanization, and biofuel crop production.
- Marketing: Aims to enhance marketing of agricultural commodities, post-harvest management, agro-processing, and food security.
- Financing: Includes agricultural insurance, information services, and risk management.
- Cross-Cutting Issues: Covers environment, gender, and information and communication technologies (ICT) in agriculture.

General Assessment of the NAP and its Implementation

The National Agricultural Policy (NAP) recognizes the significance of small, medium, and large enterprises (SMLEs) in the agricultural sector, particularly emphasizing medium-sized enterprises in value chain development and cropland expansion. However, it overlooks the crucial role of microenterprises, which contribute significantly to Tanzania's economy, especially within the agricultural sector where they play a key role in food production, employment, and rural development. By focusing primarily on medium and large enterprises, the NAP reflects an outdated belief that these larger entities are the main drivers of agricultural growth.

The policy also focuses on export crops and those with growing market importance, promoting the modernization of SMLEs, especially in agro-processing, through public-private partnerships and initiatives such as KILIMO KWANZA, TAFSIP, and SAGCOT. In its emphasis on export crops and commercialization, the NAP overlooks the unique needs and contributions of microenterprises that are essential for sustaining local livelihoods and enhancing food security at the community level. Overall, the 2013 NAP gives insufficient attention to microenterprises.

The NAP is gender sensitive in acknowledging the need for equitable participation and benefit-sharing between men and women who often have distinct roles, responsibilities, and access to resources. However, while the NAP recognizes gender as a cross-cutting issue and aims for equitable participation, its implementation plan lacks specific measures for how gender mainstreaming will be achieved in practice. The policy leaves much of this responsibility to the ministry in charge of community development and gender—without providing clear guidance on how to address gender differences effectively in areas such as access to land, resources, and decision-making processes.



The NAP notes that food safety is a critical concern in Tanzania, impacting public health and the marketability of agricultural products. The policy further identifies food safety challenges, such as low incomes, limited knowledge of food safety/hygiene, and inadequate food management practices. However, it falls short by not clearly outlining how the safety of locally produced, processed, and traded food will be ensured. In other words, the policy lacks specific guidelines for assessing food safety standards and enforcing regulatory measures for domestic production. This oversight could undermine efforts to achieve food security and safety for all Tanzanians.

The NAP addresses environmental concerns, emphasizing sustainable agricultural practices to mitigate climate change and conserve resources. Nevertheless, it lacks a clear strategy for managing the

environmental impacts of activities by MSMEs within agricultural value chains. This oversight limits the policy's effectiveness in promoting environmentally sustainable practices among small-scale producers and enterprises who are crucial for both local food security and environmental stewardship.

Overall, the NAP's shortcomings in addressing the needs of microenterprises, ensuring practical gender mainstreaming, and guaranteeing food safety and environmental sustainability suggest the need for a more comprehensive and responsive policy framework. Such a framework should recognize the diverse contributions of all stakeholders and provide clear, actionable strategies to support the evolving needs of Tanzania's agricultural sector.



Conclusion

Given its age, the National Agricultural Policy (NAP) of 2013 no longer reflects the significant global, regional, and national changes that have taken place in the agricultural sector over the past decade. As one example, the impact of climate change

on agriculture is profound, affecting crop yields, water availability, and soil health.

A review is needed to align the NAP with the Five-Year Development Plan, Tanzania's Long-Term Plan, and the Tanzania Development Vision 2025, which aim to elevate Tanzania to a middle-income status, meet Sustainable Development Goals, and advance the industrialization agenda. This review should ensure equitable gender participation in agriculture, incorporate food safety alongside nutritional and security aspects, and recognize micro and small enterprises as vital components of the agricultural economy. The revised NAP should additionally incorporate strategies to enhance climate resilience, promote sustainable agricultural practices, and support adaptation measures that align with national and global climate goals.

Moreover, effective sectoral coordination is essential to address the multifaceted challenges facing agriculture. Many issues impacting agriculture, such as energy and health, fall outside the direct control of the agricultural sector. Therefore, enhancing collaboration with sectors like energy, health, and information is necessary to foster a cohesive approach that addresses cross-sectoral challenges. Efforts should be made to minimize intersectoral conflicts and cultivate partnerships that support integrated solutions.

Photos

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